

Does anyone have suggestions on how to train staff to edit PDF files using Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, Acrobat, etc... My staff tends to be reluctant to edit PDF files and I think it's a lack of know-how. I know it's possible to use InDesign & Illustrator for this purpose because I hear of other printers doing it, but I need to get my own prepress staff properly trained and educated on the process. Maybe it's just a matter of trial-and-error, but if there is any formal training or videos on this, let me know. Many thanks.

I don't have training advice, and the questioner does not specify what type of editing is desired. I strongly recommend Enfocus Pitstop, which we use for 95% of what we wish to do to alter PDFs. If the goal is text editing, however, it would not be a great solution.

None that we know of, unless they take a paid course. These are available thru schools etc.

We use a program called Pit Stop by Adobe.

We use Pitstop to edit PDFs. We normally prefer to edit the source file instead of the PDF as and changes to the PDF file will not be reflected in the source file.

We use Adobe Illustrator

It all depends what the original file was created in (Quark, Illustrator, Publisher, Photodeluxe, etc.) Many of the pdf files we receive are created by low-end programs that save them as pdf's but are truly just embedded pictures saved as a pdf. Sometimes the pdf can be opened in Illustrator and various items changed/modified. The problem that arises then, is that fonts or graphics can be missing, so the formatting gets changed.

It's a rough task to try to edit pdf's. I've been doing it for over 10 years, and sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't.

The best advice I can give anyone regarding editing PDF files in our industry, is that they are not designed for us to edit them. They are designed to be used as is - that's why they are so difficult to work with.... they are merely a tool to bridge the gap between machine differences and software. That being said, I understand the need to occasionally have a PDF supplied incorrectly which becomes a nightmare.

First and foremost the best tool for editing PDFs is Pitstop Professional. Pitstop was built specifically for that purpose. Without it, you can spend hours (which is dollars) attempting to edit a PDF.... sometimes successfully, sometimes not. InDesign and Illustrator make it an unreliable task which takes too much time.

PDFs are a tricky thing, some are editable and others are not it really depends on where/how it was created. There are a couple of tricks that we use on a daily basis that will get you pointed in the right direction.

1. There is third party software on the market to help with the editing of PDF's. We use "pitstop", but there are many other good options out there.

- A. Pitstop (enfocus) - Acrobat plugin
- B. PDF tool Box (Callas) - Acrobat plugin
- C. Wondershare PDF Editor
- D. Infix Pdf Editor

2. You can open almost all PDF documents in Adobe illustrator. Illustrator document are based on pdf format so the only time there is really an issue is when a customer does not embed fonts and/or graphics into the PDF.

Save and compile a font library this will help a lot.

Although most graphic designers already have this, it is good to use a font manager like suitcase fusion to keep thing organized.

3. There is a lot of information about this on youtube. here is a good example.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xzGEZqwFSqM>

All PDF are not created equal. A PDF made from illustrator is really still an illustrator file and can be opened and edited assuming you have fonts and links.

PDF generated from other sources will open in illustrator but you need to review it closely for issues. Content can change so there is a bit more liability involved in doing this. You may end up with a rework on your hands?

We tend to use software such as pitstop pro for doing PDF editing (company: Enfocus). Then we run some compares of the before and after to ensure we did not change anything we were not supposed to.

Much of this is going to be trial and error however pitstop does have some online videos and support documentation.

While I am editing PDF on a regular basis the biggest issue I run into is that there is a native document out there somewhere that is now out of date (indesign, quark, word, etc.)

We've had rework because we have been asked to make changes to PDF, then customer at a later date resends us their native files and those same edits were not done there.

If we have a customer in a "PDF workflow", we try as much as we can to have them supply new pages if changes are needed.

That keeps the liability on them and ensures they are keeping their native docs up to date.

In the end it is all good judgment calls with regard to PDF editing. There are good times to do this and there are bad times.

We edit PDFs primarily with EnFocus PitStop Pro. Editing certainly has its limitations, but they are certainly the exception rather than the rule. I would venture a guess that 85 percent of all edits we perform are accomplished using PitStop Pro. Text edits, sizing, color edits are all possible with relative ease. If a glyph is missing you may not be able to make a text edit, in these cases we will delete the text in the original PDF, rename it and place the new PDF in InDesign and overlay the necessary change. Editing masks are often very challenging so caution should be used when attempting to do so.

Photo color corrections can often be accomplished with Acrobat Pro using the "Edit Image" function, transparency setting can sometimes cause problems when attempting these changes.

Adobe Illustrator is a PDF editor, but that can be rather restrictive.

Experience is going to be your best teacher, be cautious as you begin the process and you'll soon be on your way to gaining the confidence and skills needed.

Editor's Note: here are some possible training resources:

- For online videos: lynda.com
- For books: Peachpit Press
- For questions: Acrobat online user group community